

REMARKS

1. The current status of the claims is shown by the attached CLAIMS LISTING. Please note that claims 1 and 13 have been amended to correct a typographical error.

2. The Office Action mailed November 2, 2004 cited two new references, Gerrone (US 5,458,640) and Dehdashtian (US 6,024,729). These new references actually help to support the patentability of the amended claims.

Gerrone (US 5,458,640) shows a valved connector with a tubular structure 12 that penetrates the valve seal 120 from a proximal side 4 to a distal side 5. In addition, the presence of secondary seals 21 and 21A at the proximal end of the tubular structure 12 prevents the valved connector from providing an open channel for inserting a secondary device through the connector body.

Dehdashtian (US 6,024,729) shows a valved connector that utilizes a separate hollow loader or catheter 24 that penetrates the valve assembly 12 from a proximal side to a distal side to open the passage for insertion of a guide wire 26.

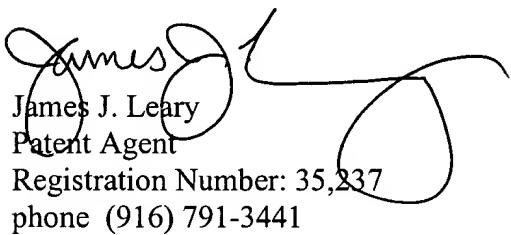
Neither Gerrone nor Dehdashtian disclose or fairly suggest the claimed features of a valved connector with a tubular portion that extends through the valve element from a distal side to a proximal side to open the valve element, wherein, when in the open position, the proximal end of the tubular portion is exposed on the exterior of the valved connector to provide an open channel for inserting a secondary device through the valved connector.

These references actually teach away from this inventive solution to the problem of passing a fragile or delicate device through a valved connector without damage, therefore they would provide no motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to modify either of the other cited references, Wolff-Mooij (US 4,610,469) and Mayer (US 5,470,319), in this manner. Applicant therefore submits that the claims as amended are patentable over the prior art cited.

CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that the claims all define novel subject matter that is unobvious. Therefore, allowance of such claims is submitted to be proper and is respectfully requested. If Examiner deems that additional changes are needed prior to allowance of the claims, Examiner is urged to initiate a telephonic interview with applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

Very respectfully submitted,



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